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ABSTRACT

A descriptive study examined the nature of compensatory education (CE) reading instruction and its relationship to the classroom setting. Subjects were 28 second-grade children and 5 pairs of second-grade and compensatory education reading teachers at 5 elementary schools in a school district located in a small community. Data on the teachers, students, and types of activities that comprised both classroom and remedial instruction were obtained over several months through the use of observation and teacher interviews. Results indicated that CE reading instruction provided to poor readers was similar to descriptions from classroom-based research in that reading instruction was delivered largely through written assignments and question-and-answer sessions. Students listened a great deal to their teachers and to their classmates; they responded when called on to respond; and they fulfilled many paper and pencil tasks. There was little oral reading, and silent reading of connected text and composing were virtually nonexistent. Goals of classroom teachers and CE teachers were similar: to provide a firm foundation in basal reading skills, with emphasis on decoding skills and word recognition development. It is evident that both in the classroom and in the CE setting, these poorer readers are being given only partial aspects of the basal instructional program. (Three tables of data are included.) (RS)

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Kathy Pike

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION READING INSTRUCTION AND CONGRUENCE: PASSPORT TO LITERACY?

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Kathy Pike

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION READING INSTRUCTION AND CONGRUENCE: PASSPORT TO LITERACY?

INTRODUCTION

In answer to the question, "What goes on in our schools?", Goodlad (1977) stated that, "There is only one honest answer....It is that our knowledge is exceedingly limited" (p. 4). Since Goodlad answered that question, the knowledge about schooling has increased with such publications as A Place Called School (Goodlad, 1984) and Among Schoolchildren (Kidder, 1989), among others. Goodlad's comprehensive study of all aspects of schooling took him into over a thousand classrooms, while Kidder's book gives an insightful portrait into a year in the life of an elementary school teacher. In looking at schools in order to gain an understanding of what goes on in them, it is important to remember that children in elementary schools today not only receive instruction from their regular classroom teachers, but many of the children qualify for additional instruction in the form of compensatory education (CE), e.g., remedial reading or math. Whereas a number of aspects of CE have been routinely examined in the educational literature (historical reviews, overall achievement effects, and certain presage and contextual variables), few empirical reports have focused on this remedial treatment as an instructional effort.

Compensatory education consists of those educational activities that are designed to help overcome the educational deficits generally associated with adverse environmental conditions. This supplementary instruction in reading, as well as

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math and language arts instruction, was instituted to provide low-income, educationally disadvantaged children with special activities that would supplement, but not supplant, regular classroom instruction (Haywood, 1982; Marcus and Stickney, 1981).

To go back to the question asked to Goodlad, "What goes on in our schools?", this study was undertaken to answer that question as it relates to CE. This study investigated the nature of reading instruction in pullout CE reading programs. In order to describe this remedial instruction, two general research questions were addressed: (1). What is the nature of the reading instruction in pullout compensatory reading programs?; and (2). What relationship exists between the instruction offered in the regular classroom setting?

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to provide descriptive information on the content of reading instruction provided poor readers who qualify for CE instruction in one school district. This reading instruction provided to such children consists of both classroom reading instruction delivered by the students' regular classroom teacher and additional supplementary reading instruction delivered in pullout compensatory settings by a specialist. Whereas the reading instruction given to poor readers in their classrooms has been explored in the literature (Allington, 1980, 1983, 1984; Gambrell, Wilson, and Gantt, 1981; Hiebert, 1983), there is not much data on the nature of reading instruction delivered in pullout settings.

Setting

This study took place in a small city with a population of approximately 25,000 people. Within the school district (student population 7600), there are 10 elementary schools, 3 junior high schools, and 1 high school. Five of the elementary schools participated in the study.

Subjects

The student sample studied consisted of 28 second grade children receiving compensatory instruction in reading. There were 12 girls and 16 boys, with 4 of the children being children of color. All of the children were eligible for CE, e.g., they were below grade level in their reading achievement as determined by standardized tests and by their placement in the basal reading program in the classroom.

Five pairs of second grade and CE reading teachers participated in the study, nine of whom were female. The range of teaching experience for the classroom teachers (who were female) was 11 to 22 years. All five classroom teachers had at least half of their teaching experience at the second grade level.

All of the CE teachers held certification in reading, but only one had earned an advanced degree in reading. The range of teaching experience for the CE teachers was 14 to 29 years (including both classroom teaching and CE instruction). The range of experience in the field of reading was 10 to 18 years.

Instrumentation

To answer the two general research questions regarding the

nature of CE reading instruction and its relationship to the classroom setting, data on the teachers, students, and the types of activities that comprised both classroom and remedial instruction were obtained through the use of observation and teacher interviews. The observational data were gathered using two overlapping procedures: an activity structure perspective; and the use of an observational form (Student Level of Beginning Reading - SOBR).

An activity structure perspective provided the framework for describing both classroom and CE reading instruction. An activity structure perspective decomposes classroom activities into discernible events or episodes (Berliner, 1983; Burns and Anderson, 1984). Berliner (1983) in his study of elementary classrooms identified eleven activity structures. These activity structures form the basis of the Activity Structure perspective that was used in this study. Since Berliner's activity structures were determined from observations made throughout the regular classroom day, and had not been explored in detail during classroom reading instruction, and had not been applied in CE settings, modifications were necessary.

The activity structures used in ths study were: oral reading; silent reading; written practice; two-way presentation; one-way presentation; mediated presentation; sustained silent reading; dictation; story listening; construction; testing; games; play; housekeeping; management (including management transition, management procedures, management behavior, and management

correction). The activity structures are described in the Appendix.

Within each activity structure, various specific activities occur. For example, within the activity sturucture categorized as guided practice, children may be reading orally, may be listening to another child read orally, may be reading silently, etc. The specific teacher and student activities were noted through the use of the SOBR observational scheme, which was designed to focus on the content of instructional activities in reading at the individual student (or teacher) level.

Included in the SOBR observational scheme are both non-reading as well as reading activities, so that all the time observed can be coded. Non-reading activities include: academic other; management; waiting; absent; out of the room; and off task.

Reading categories are divided into direct and indirect reading, both of which occur in the presence of print. SOBR "is based on a definite view of what reading consists of (direct reading) and what activities support learning to read (writing, discussion, listening)" (Leinhardt and Seewald, 1980, p. 2). Direct reading behaviors include oral and silent reading of letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs. Indirect reading behaviors include story discussion, circling pictures with a common phonic element, and spelling tasks.

Provision for the observation and coding of the specific types of teacher behaviors are also available through the use of the SOBR system. There are five categories of teacher codes: cognitive,

coginitive explanation, management, academic other, and no contact (Leinhardt and Seewald, 1980). Cognitive interactions are used when a teacher is interacting with a student in reading. Cognitive explanations are used if the teacher tells students how to do a task or supplies a strategy for doing so. This behavior is what is often referred to as "instruction" or "teaching" and includes lesson presentation, modeling, and feedback.

Observations of both the classroom reading group instruction and of CE reading instruction were conducted over a time period of several months. Each pair of the participating teachers (a classroom teacher and a CE teacher) were observed on the same day. The amount of time observed varied depending on the actual time used for reading instruction.

The activity structures occurring during the allocated reading period were chronologically recorded. This was done simultaneously with the coding of the individual students and teachers using SOBR. Fuller descriptions of the events were also recorded. Thus, a complete narrative description accompanies each observed session.

Interviews of the teachers were conducted after each set of observations was concluded. The interview data were used to provide further information for addressing question two. The data from the interviews were used to ascertain the stated goals for the compensatory instruction for both the classroom teachers and the CE teachers, and to determine the extent of communication between the CE teachers and the classroom teachers.

Reliability

The reliability of the observations is central to any observational study. Several strategies were used in this study to reduce the threats to reliability: the use of several sources of data collection, the provision of narrative descriptions of the activity codes, and extensive observer training. Several systems were utilized for obtaining information on how time was used in reading instruction so as to provide as rich as description of CE as possible. Along with the coding of the observed behaviors are brief descriptions of each observed behavior (for both the activity structures and SOBR). In addition to SOBR and the activity structures, a narrative description of the reading period accompany each session.

FINDINGS

Before presenting the findings, certain limitations should be noted when interpreting the data from this observational study. This study was limited to one grade level in one school district and the data were collected by one observer. Due to the history and nature of CE, instruction has generally been provided in small groups and such was the case in this study. Thus, the number of students in the targeted sample population is relativley small. This study also occurred during a concentrated portion of the school year (spring) and activities may vary throughout the school year (Karweit and Slavin, 1982).

Although the sample in this study is small and is limited to what one investigator observed in CE reading instruction in one

school district, "a rich detailed body of data on even a small sample of representative schools can shed much light on problems and issues that may be endemic to schooling" (Goodlad, 1983).

Activity Structures

As stated previously, an activity structure perspective has not been systematically applied to CE instruction in reading, therefore there has been no empirical evidence supporting the existence and/or use of activity structures in CE reading instruction. The data obtained in this study reveal that activity structures do occur in CE settings, as well as in regular classroom settings. The percentages for all the activity structures in this study are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

ACTIVITY STRUCTURES IN SECOND GRADE READING INSTRUCTION

Activity Structure	CE	Classroom
Guided Written Practice	11.6%	13.3%
Independent Written Practice	13.8%	10.0%
Two-Way Presentation	15.5%	24.5%
Dictation	1.9%	0.0%
One-Way Presentation	1.1%	1.2%
Games	1.1%	0.005%
Oral Reading	.006%	5.0%
Silent Reading	.002%	7.6%
Testing	9.0%	5.9%
Management-Transition	11.6%	14.0%
Management-Correction	7.8%	15.7%
Management-Procedural	4.5%	2.1%
Management-Behavioral	.006%	.003%
Mediated-Presentation	8.7%	0.0%
Not in the Room	11.9%	0.0%

From this table, the data reveal that written practice activities account for a large proportion of the instructional time in CE reading (33.2%). This includes guided and independent

written practice, dictation (which was essentially guided practice), and those portions (5.9%) of the tape-recorded presentations which were guided practice activities delivered by a tape, as opposed to delivery by a teacher. Written practice activities are activities that involve paper and pencil tasks, mainly workbook pages and dittos, and not to be confused with original and creative written composition activities.

Discussion and recitation sessions comprise the next largest concentration of instructional time (18.3%). This percentage includes the portion of the tape-recorded activities which involved student recitations, not written responses. Together written practice activities and discussion and recitation account for 51.5% of the students' time in CE.

The above percentages are for four CE teachers who conducted instruction with the entire group. One CE teacher conducted an individualized tutorial program, delivered by adult volunteer tutors. The findings were based on time samples and are not averaged with the other CE programs.

The findings for the individualized tutorial program were: Out of the Room (14.1%); Two-way Presentation (11.5%); Games (14.7%); Oral Reading (14.7%); Dictation (32.7%); Management-transition (8.3%); Mediated-presentation (3.8%).

Therefore in this study, activities involving written practice activities, discussion and recitation activities, transitions, and not being in the room accounted for most of the time in reading instruction in pullout compensatory reading programs. Little oral

reading of connected text was observed, with the exception of the tutorial program, and silent reading of connected text was virtually non-existent, as was composing.

Instructional and Non-instructional Activities

Within the time available for reading, some instruction time is lost to transitional, procedural, and behavioral activities. Therefore a breakdown in the time spent in reading instruction can be made by noting the amount spent on instructional activities, as opposed to time spent for non-instructional activities. Instructional activities include listening, writing, oral reading, silent reading, and discussion and recitiation. Non-instructional activities include waiting, management, and off-task or inappropriate behaviors, and time spent not in the room for the CE setting or group in the regular classroom.

The children in the CE setting spent most of their actual CE time in instructional activities. Students spent 66.7% of their time in compensatory reading in activities that were instructional in nature. In the regular classroom setting students spent 71% of their reading instructional time in instructional activities. The fact that students in both settings spent the majority of time on instructionally related activities is similar to findings in the literature that state that around 70% of the time in school is spent on instructional activities (Goodlad, 1984).

Direct and Indirect Reading Activities

Direct reading behaviors accounted for 21.7% of the time for children in CE settings. Children were involved in indirect

reading behaviors for 45.1% of the time in CE instruction and in non-instructional activities for 33.5% of the time. Therefore the observed students spent 78.6% of their time in the CE setting in indirect and non-instructional activities. The findings were similar for the regular classroom setting as well. Direct reading activities accounted for 21.5% of the time in the classroom setting. Students were involved in indirect reading behaviors for 49.7% of the time in the regular classroom and for 28.8% of the time in non-instructional activities.

Specific Activities in Reading Instruction

The percentages for the time spent on the specific activities for both settings are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES IN SECOND GRADE READING INSTRUCTION

Specific Activities	CE	Classroom
Silent Reading	3.8%	9.7%
Written Activities	21.6%	15.7%
Discussion/Recitation	4.9%	4.3%
Oral Reading	15.9%	10.9%
Listening	20.5%	30.5%
Management	6.8%	9.5%
Waiting	9.4%	14.0%
Off-task	1.1%	1.0%
Not-in-the Room (group)	16.0%	4.4%

In the present study, written transformation activities, listening, students not in the room, and oral reading account for a great deal of available instructional time in the CE setting. Written transformation activities are those that involve students in minor changes of the material presented as on workbook exercises and on dittos. Along with the children not being in the CE setting

for 16% of their allocated time, these activities account for two-thirds of the instructional time in CE. These data are not to be confused with the data from the Activity Structure perspective which looks at the framework of a reading session as opposed to the activities of individual students.

The students were involved in many written assignments (15.7%) and in listening activities (30.5%) for a great deal of their reading time in the classroom setting as well. These data are similar to the findings of many classroom observation studies (Ysseldyke and Algozzine, 1983; Duffy and McIntyre, 1980; Durkin, 1984).

Level of Instruction

Since the question of level of response is concerned with only those activities that can be categorized according to level, the percentages cited are based on the following activities: silent reading; discussion and recitation; oral reading; listening; and writing. The percentages for each level of instruction are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

LEVEL OF INSTRUCTION

Level of Instruction	CE	Classroom
letter level	11.2%	4.8%
word level	53.1%	39.8%
sentence level	11.4%	34.8%
paragraph level	19.0%	15.1%
story level	5.2%	5.5%

In the CE setting, 75.7% of the instructional time was spent at the letter, word, and sentence levels. Although activities at

the paragraph level represented 19% of the instructional time for the CE setting, these activities were mainly conducted through discussion and recitation. Children in CE settings worked for only 5.2% of their instructional time at the story level.

Students likewise spent the majority of their instructional time on lowel level text forms (activities at the letter, word, and sentence levels) in the regular classroom setting as well. It appears that the emphasis of instruction for the observed low achievement students in these second grade settings focuses on lower levels of text.

Teacher Activities

Cognitive activities accounted for most of the teachers' time in both settings. In the CE setting, the teachers were engaged in cognitive activities for 55.7% of their allocated time, and in regular classroom settings, cognitive activities represented 74% of the teachers' time. CE teachers were not with their students for 16.4% of the time (generally because the students had not yet arrived) whereas classroom teachers were not with their students for 7.8% of the time, even though the students were present in the reading group. Management activities accounted for 24.4% of the CE teachers' time and 16.5% of the classroom teachers' time. Little "teaching" was evident in either setting during the observations, as cognitive explanation accounted for little of the teachers' time. However it should be noted that at no time during the observations did the investigator see the initiation of a skills unit in the CE setting. The CE teachers approached their

instructional programs through a unit approach, i.e., each skill area involved a packet of worksheets, a series of taped presentations, etc. The lack of observations of the initiation of a unit perhaps contributed to the findings. In the classroom setting, skills were not approached in unit form. Instead they were presented and worked upon as isolated skill areas.

Comparison of Goals and Materials

The goals of the CE teachers, and the goals classroom teachers had for CE were similar - that of providing a firm foundation in the basal reading program, defined primarily as decoding and word recognition skills. Classroom teachers specifically requested help with skills in the basal program, as opposed to unrelated curricula, whereas CE teachers desired to work on any skills they felt would build a strong background for reading. Neither setting was concerned about the lack of text level activities in CE, as text level activities were not given an instructional priority for the CE setting.

Classroom teachers relied on the same basal program throughout the district, whereas CE teachers used an assortment of materials. The classroom reading program emphasized a variety of skills from vocabulary building to decoding activities to comprehending basal stories. In the CE setting, the materials reflected a strong decoding emphasis. More concentrated time was devoted to specific skills instruction in the CE setting, with the skills being presented in unit-type approaches.

Extent of Communication

The existing communication between settings was minimal with informal conferencing being reported as the prevalent means of communicating. CE teachers reported more informal meetings than did the classroom teachers. CE teachers were familiar with the scope and sequence of the basal program that was used in the classroom, the level of the program in which their students were working, and the skills in need of remediation as determined by the testing components of the program. Although CE teachers were familiar with the scope and sequence of the second grade reading curriculum, they could not describe the exact skills currently being worked on in the classroom. Classroom teachers could not describe the instruction that took place in the CE setting.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Student Activities

The CE reading instruction provided to the poor readers in the second grade in this study is similar to descriptions from classroom-based research in that reading instruction is delivered largely through written assignments and question and answer sessions (Leinhardt, Zigmond, and Cooley, 1981; Goodlad, 1984). CE instruction called for certain ways of learning and excluded others: students listened a great deal to their teachers and to their classmates; they responded when called on to respond; and they fulfilled many paper and pencil tasks. These activities were accomplished through the use of commercial materials.

Decoding skills were the major focus of instruction that were typically taught and stressed in this study. Other aspects of

reading instruction, as comprehension and functional reading, were not emphasized. This finding was similar to the literature on the instruction given to poor readers in their classrooms. Present day reading instruction for poor readers is more often directed to word recognition activities than to recognition of text level concepts, and foster recall over analysis of information (Durkin, 1979; Gambrell et al, 1981; Mason and Osborn, 1982; Hiebert, 1983; Allington, 1983, 1984).

This emphasis on decoding skills seems understandable from several perspectives. First a common belief of many teachers is that most of the instructional time in the first three grades should be spent in teaching students how to recognize print, whereas in the upper elementary grades it should center on learning from text (Mason, 1984).

Many commercial materials, e.g., workbooks, dittos, packaged kits, etc., emphasize activities that focus on the accuracy of word identification, as did those selected by the CE teachers in this study. Therefore it is natural that what the commercial materials emphasize is what will be emphasized in instruction (Durkin, 1981; Duffy, 1983).

Another reason for the skills emphasis is the movement for accountability and the measure almost universally imposed is a skills-based achievement test. Little public pressure has been applied regarding outcomes associated with recreational reading, content area reading, or functional reading. Therefore little emphasis is placed on these outcomes. However, this may in the

future change with the current movement in seeking alternative assessment.

An important component in developing reading ability is the practice of oral and silent reading. Students frequently are given little time to practice contextual reading, and looking at the results in this study, this practice exists in the CE setting as well. The pursuit of oral contextual reading and silent reading did not account for much of the observed CE reading instructional programs. Instead of being provided with additional practice in oral and silent reading in the CE setting, these poor readers were given additional indirect reading tasks. Moreover, practice in oral and silent reading occurred mainly with worksheets and workbooks (with the exception of oral reading in the tutorial program). Allington (1983) has proposed that the lowered achievement of poor readers may be due as much to the instruction given to poor readers as to their ability or learning styles, particularly given the substantially lesser amounts of contextual reading poor readers do.

Relationship between CE and Regular Classroom Instruction

There is research available that demonstrates that student achievement has a greater likelihood of improving if all those involved in delivering instruction purposefully and frequently coordinate their efforts (U.S. Department of Education, 1987; Birman, 1988). Allington and Shake (1986) recommend that instructional programs in both the classroom and CE settings be coordinated in order to support the mastery of the core classroom

curriculum. Failing to align the curriculum may result in an instructional program that is fragmented, which in turn may cause "cognitive confusion" for the students involved. Exposing students to different instruction with different goals and different materials can confuse the remedial student.

Within the past few years, the existence of a lack of coordination between the classroom setting and the CE setting has been documented (Johnston, Allington, and Afflerbach, 1985; Allington and Shake, 1986; Allington and McGill-Franzen, 1988). This frequently results in a fragmented instructional program for the compensatory students.

In the present study, the classroom teachers' goals for their students in the classroom revolved around coverage in the basal reading program (which encompasses a wide spectrum of reading activities and skills). However, the general goals of the classroom teachers and CE teachers for the targeted students' reading instruction in the CE setting were quite similar, that of reinforcing an aspect of the basal reading program, particularly emphasizing lower level skills and word recognition development.

The materials used in CE reading instruction were compatible with this skills oriented aspect of the basal reading program. The activities undertaken by the students likewise reflected this emphasis on decoding and word recognition. "Cognitive clarity" might be enhanced as a result of the similarity between goals, but so may the development of the students' concept and perceptions of what is reading. With a strong emphasis on skills in the classroom

setting, and an even stronger skills emphasis in the CE setting, students may conceive of skills instruction as being "reading" or at least the most important phase of reading instruction.

The relationship between the two settings was partially supportive in nature, as reflected by the actual and desired goals for CE by both classroom teachers and CE teachers, and by the lower level decoding skills emphasized in the CE setting (which were undertaken to fulfill the goals). Although the relationship was supportive, it was supportive of only one aspect of the basal instructional program, that of decoding and word recognition skills delivered primarily through written practice activities and discussion and recitation. Children in the CE setting were not given support and practice in the direct reading activities of oral and silent reading.

Extent of Communication

In the curricular congruence study undertaken by Johnston, Allington, and Afflerbach (1985) a dissimilarity between classroom and remedial instruction was found. The goals, materials, and activities in their study were different in the two settings, and a separateness between the two settings was very evident. The researchers suggest that the possible causes for a lack of congruence might include: a belief by teachers and/or administrators that a lack of congruence was appropriate in that a different educational program might better serve the students' needs who had not been successful in the regular program; the limited communication between the settings; and a conflict of goals

between the classroom teachers and the CE teachers.

In the present study, a conflict between the goals between the teachers in the two settings did not exist, nor did any of the participants believe that a lack of congruence was appropriate. A lack of congruence may be due to the extent of communication between the classroom and CE teachers. Neither classroom teachers nor CE teachers reported meeting formally to discuss children and/or programs. However, they did state that they did meet informally, i.e., in the halls or in the faculty room. There was a disparity between frequency of the informal meetings, with the CE teachers' reporting more frequent meetings. Communication was relatively one-sided with the CE teachers apparently receiving more feedback and information from the classroom teachers.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

An issue rises above the question concerned with the strength of the relationship between the settings. Students tend to learn what they practice, and there is little hope that students will do well on competencies for which they receive little or no preparation and instruction. There is not enough time in the school year to teach everything. Priorities and goals need to be established as to what constitutes the most effective reading program for poor readers. It is important to identify the instructional activities that will help poor readers achieve and then teach and provide practice on these objectives. There must be clearer guidance concerning what kinds of tasks should be reinforced in CE so as to yield the greatest student achievement.

It is also important to look at all the aspects of congruence, which has usually been defined in terms of the coordination between the classroom and CE settings. Walp and Walmsley (1989) maintain that three kinds of congruence should be examined - procedural, instructional, and philosophical. Procedural congruence is concerned with the mechanics of coordinating the two settings, whereas the content and delivery of the reading programs in both settings are the concerns of instructional congruence. Philosophical congruence takes into account the theoretical and philosophical assumptions that underlie the teaching of reading. Instructional and philosophical issues must be addressed when considering the reading instruction provided to poor readers in both settings. In doing so, a more informed understanding of the nature of reading instruction provided to students with reading difficulties will be obtained.

This paper was started with a question, "What goes on in our schools?" and it shall also end with a question, "What kind of time on what kind of tasks under what conditions?" (Strother, 1984). By looking at what constitutes the optimal instructional program for poor readers along with the three aspects of congruence, then the reading program for poor readers will truly provide these children with **A PASSPORT TO LITERACY**.